

COINS

Doom sets in for Susan B. dollar

By Roger Boye

The Susan B. Anthony dollar is doomed, judging from President Reagan's planned budget for fiscal 1982.

Administration bosses requested no money for production of a dollar coin next year, saying they have enough 1979 and 1980 "Susie B's" in storage to last for 50 years. The mint has made more than 800 million dollar coins since 1979, but most people refuse to use them.

Late last year, officials in the Carter White House discussed changing the coin's color or the design on the tails side in an attempt to get the dollar in circulation. But the new administration prefers to let Ms. Anthony "die in peace."

During 1981, Uncle Sam plans to make Anthony dollars for inclusion in collector coin sets, but none for general circulation. If production is halted entirely after this year as planned, the Anthony dollar will become the shortest-lived, noncommemorative U.S. coin design so far this century. The "runner-up" Eisenhower dollar lasted for eight years.

● Much to the dismay of hobbyists, the Reagan administration also plans to discontinue production of uncirculated coin sets next year.

The sets — made annually since 1947 — have become only "marginally profitable" for the government, according to an official quoted in Numismatic News. Treasury administrators believe workers' time can be better utilized in other phases of mint operations.

In 1980, the government sold 2.8 million uncirculated coin sets for \$9 each; the ordering period for 1981 sets should begin about Sept. 1, as originally planned by the Carter administration.

Budget cutbacks will not affect production of the even more popular proof sets in 1982, and Uncle Sam will continue to make the half-ounce and one-ounce gold medallions next year.

Overall, the mint's planned 1982 budget is down 15 per cent from 1981 budget appropriations. Nearly 180 positions will be eliminated next year, reducing the mint staff to about 2,000 workers.

● President Reagan has appointed a numismatic neophyte — Ohio state legislator Donna Pope — to be director of the mint.

Assuming the U.S. Senate confirms the appointment, Mrs. Pope will oversee production of at least 15 billion coins annually and the sale of proof coin sets and other items to collectors.

Hobby experts had predicted that the President would follow tradition and appoint a woman. Since 1933, four women and only one man have served as mint director.

Mrs. Pope, 49, was cochairman of Reagan's Ohio campaign and has been a strong supporter of the administration. The most recent director, Democrat Stella Hackel Sims of Maine, resigned April 1.